

LOW WAGE NATION

Nearly half of new U.S. jobs don't pay enough to make ends meet

MONTANA The Job Gap

FACT SHEET

Total job seekers: 53,000

Total job openings: 18,492

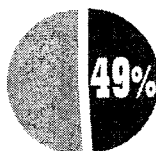
SINGLE ADULT

6 

1
JOB 

- ▶ 6 job seekers for every 1 job opening
- ▶ 49% of openings don't pay living wage

**PERCENT AVAILABLE
JOBS THAT DON'T
PAY LIVING WAGE**



SINGLE ADULT with two children

16 

1
JOB 

- ▶ 16 job seekers for every 1 job opening
- ▶ 82% of openings don't pay living wage

**PERCENT AVAILABLE
JOBS THAT DON'T
PAY LIVING WAGE**



KEY FINDINGS FOR MONTANA

Forty-nine percent of job openings pay less than \$14.40 an hour, the living wage for a single adult. More than four out of five, 82 percent, pay less than \$25.82 an hour, the living wage for a single adult with two children.

For each job opening that pays at least \$14.40 an hour, the living wage for a single adult, there are six job-seekers on average. For each job opening that pays at least \$25.82 an hour, the living wage for a single adult with two children, there are 16 job-seekers on average.

DOWNLOAD THE FULL REPORT ONLINE

www.thejobgap.org

NATIONAL SUMMARY

Workers are falling short financially in our nation, and there are few living wage jobs to go around. With most of America's job growth taking place in low-wage occupations, the reality facing workers is clear: *America is becoming a low-wage nation and, without action, the living wage crisis will only continue to worsen.*

WE LIVE IN A NATION WHERE WORKERS ARE NOT EARNING ENOUGH TO MAKE ENDS MEET, AND HAVE FEW OPTIONS TO INCREASE THEIR WAGES.

- **A large proportion of workers are not earning living wages:** Nearly two of five existing jobs pay less than \$15 an hour.
- **Nearly half of new jobs are low-wage jobs:** About 48 percent of projected national job openings do not pay \$15 or higher. In analyzing individual states, that percentage ranges from 35 percent (Massachusetts) to 61 percent (South Dakota).
- **There are not enough living wage jobs to go around:** Nationally, there are seven times more job-seekers than there are projected jobs paying \$15 or higher, leaving workers seeking better wages with few options.

MOST OF AMERICA'S JOB GROWTH IS TAKING PLACE IN LOW-WAGE OCCUPATIONS.

- **Largest-growing occupations don't pay living wages:** Among the top 10 occupations with the most projected job openings, just one has a median wage greater than \$15 an hour. The four occupations with the greatest projected number of job openings are in retail and food service, with median wages ranging between \$8.81 and \$10.16 an hour. Many of these low-wage, high-growth occupations disproportionately employ women and people of color, negatively affecting their chances of making ends meet.
- **Largest-growing jobs are among the lowest-paying:** Two of the top five occupations with the most projected job openings also rank among the top five in lowest pay.

FOR WORKERS TO MAKE ENDS MEET, RAISE WAGES, STRENGTHEN SUPPORT SYSTEMS, AND INVEST IN HIGHER-WAGE INDUSTRIES LIKE HEALTH CARE.

- **Invest in higher-pay industries, like the health care sector:** Out of the 61 "Healthcare Practitioners and Technical" occupations defined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, just two have a median wage that is less than \$15 an hour. Even in the lower-paying "Healthcare Support Occupations," the majority of occupations pay more than \$12 per hour, significantly above the federal minimum wage. Investing in health care and other higher-wage industries can reverse the trend of primarily low-wage job growth.
- **Increase the minimum wage to benefit workers in all industries:** Raising the wage floor would move all occupations toward providing wages that can meet basic needs.
- **Strengthen support systems:** Federal and state programs like food stamps, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and child care subsidies help working families earning less than a living wage get by.

"Last Christmas, I took a part-time sales job to catch us up on some bills. Unfortunately, I was so tired that I became ill and ended up in the hospital."

EVERYTHING IS EXPENSIVE

SUSIE RODRIGUEZ
BELGRADE MT

I am a Mexican-American woman with a beautiful daughter, a wonderful husband, and a job I enjoy. I've worked really hard to get where I am, and I plan to continue building my career.

In high school, I had hopes of becoming a doctor, and took Advanced Placement classes so I could get college credits. I was in the top 10 of 300 students in my graduating class — while also working to help my mother support our family of seven. I entered college with enough credits to qualify as a second-year student.

Then I had a medical crisis of my own — I went blind. My eyesight eventually returned, but my college scholarships didn't, and I couldn't afford tuition to continue my studies. I took a certification course that cost me about \$600 to become a Certified Nurse. Then, with more course work that cost about \$800, I became an Emergency Medical Technician.

I now work as an emergency room technician at a local hospital. I work the night shift, from 7 p.m. until 7 a.m., three days a week to make \$4 more an hour. After seven years, I am up to almost \$16 an hour by working nights. I have to work full-time; our family needs the health insurance. I pay for it out of my paycheck, and it isn't cheap for a family.

Now I'd like to become a Registered Nurse. With a growing family, I'll have to work and take one course at a time. It's a lot more expensive that way.

My husband, Luis, works at a local dairy. It takes two of us working full-time just to cover the costs for our family. We can never get ahead. My daughter stays with my mother the nights that I work, and, during the day, she goes to a babysitter so I can sleep. Everything is expensive.

Last Christmas, I took a part-time sales job to catch us up on some bills. Unfortunately, I was so tired that I became ill and ended up in the hospital. It took me a while to recover. I want to do more with my life and my career.



2014 MONTANA JOB GAP

Total Job Seekers: 53,000

Total Job Openings: 18,492

	Household 1: Single adult	Household 2: Single adult with one child	Household 3: Single adult with two children	Household 4: Two adults (one working) with two children
Living wage levels	\$14.40	\$19.85	\$25.82	\$28.44
Living wage job openings	9,370	5,458	3,275	2,156
Job seekers per living wage opening	6 to 1	10 to 1	16 to 1	25 to 1
Percent of all job openings paying less than a living wage	49%	70%	82%	88%



The Alliance for a Just Society's mission is to execute regional and national campaigns and build strong state affiliate organizations and partnerships that address economic, racial, and social inequities. www.allianceforajustsociety.org

ALLIANCE AFFILIATES

The Center for Community Growth (Pennsylvania)

The Center for Intercultural Organizing (Oregon)

Citizen Action of New York

Connecticut Citizen Action Group

Idaho Community Action Network

Indian People's Action (Montana)

Maine People's Alliance

Make the Road New York

Montana Organizing Project

OneAmerica (Washington)

Oregon Action

Race Forward

Restaurant Opportunities Center United

Virginia Organizing

Washington Community Action Network



Community.
Faith. Labor.
Montana's
Movement



The Alliance's **Job Gap Economic Prosperity Series** examines the ability of working families to move beyond living paycheck-to-paycheck in today's economy, seeking to understand both the barriers keeping families from achieving economic prosperity and what actions policymakers can take to help families and communities thrive. www.thejobgap.org